N°13

Early Seekers of Christ Directed and Encourag'd,

IN A

SERMON

On PROV. VIII. 17.

Preach'd at

PETTY-FRANCE,

May the First, 1729.

By *JOHN GUYSE.*

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN CLARK and RICHARD HETT, at the *Bible* and *Crown* in the *Poultrey*, near *Cheapside*; and JOHN OSWALD, at the *Rose* and *Crown* in *Little Britain*, 1729.

(Price 6 *d.*)

G.R. III.
BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

Mr. *William Coward*,

Merchant of *LONDON*,

The following SERMON,

Preach'd and Publiſh'd at his Requeſt,

Is humbly Inſcrib'd,

With great Reſpect,

BY

His Obliged

Humble Servant,

JOHN GUYSE.

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PROV. viii. 17.

Thoſe that ſeek me early, ſhall find me.

THESE Words, together with the whole Chapter, are *Wiſdom*'s Speech to the Sons of Men. [1] *Doth not Wiſdom cry? and Underſtanding put forth her Voice? Unto you, O Men, I call, and my Voice is to the Sons of Men. Hear, for I will ſpeak of excellent things.*

This *Wiſdom* is ſuppoſed by ſome to be the eſſential Wiſdom of God, or that Attribute of the Divine Nature, which bears that Name; and by others, that Knowledge of God, which he gives us in and by his Word. But it ſeems to me, that ſeveral Paſſages in this Chapter can't by any Figure of Speech, without the utmoſt Violence, be conſider'd as the Language of either of theſe. Accordingly, the beſt of antient and modern Interpreters underſtand them of Chriſt, the *perſonal* Wiſdom of God.

He is call'd in Scripture *the Word*, and *the Word of God*, *Wiſdom*, and *the Wiſdom of God*, by way of eminence and peculiarity, as [2] *all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge are hid in him*, and all the Deſigns of that Wiſdom toward the Sons of Men are diſcovered by him. He is

[1] Verſ. 1, 4, 6. [2] Col. 2. 3.

the

the [1] *Word that in the Beginning was with God, and was God.* And [2] *his Name is called the Word of God.* He ſpeaks of himſelf, as [3] *Wiſdom that is juſtified of all her Children:* And the Evangeliſt *Luke* introduces his Words thus, [4] *Therefore alſo ſaith the Wiſdom of God, I will ſend them Prophets,* &c. which are recorded in *Matthew* as Chriſt's own Words, [5] *Behold, I ſend unto you Prophets,* &c. And he is call'd [6] *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.* Theſe Appellations of Chriſt, are a proper Comment on the *Wiſdom* that ſpeaks in the Chapter where our Text is. The Title agrees to Chriſt; the whole Diſcourſe runs in a perſonal Strain; and a *Proſopopœia* is by no means to be allow'd of, when the Terms may be taken in a proper Senſe. All the Parts of this Diſcourſe may be fairly apply'd to Chriſt, and ſeveral of them plainly appear to be peculiar to him, and uncapable of being apply'd, with any juſtneſs of Thought, to any Thing or Perſon, but him.

And as Chriſt is the Object of our deareſt Love, Devotion, Deſire and Choice; and as our richeſt Advantage lies in his Love to us, and in his being found by us: ſo nothing can be more ſuitable to his Demands upon us, or more encouraging to our Expectations from him, than what he ſays in the Verſe which concludes with our Text. *I love them that love me, and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall*

[1] Joh. 1. 1. [2] Rev. 19. 13. [3] Luk. 7. 35.
[4] Luk. 11. 49. [5] Matt. 23. 34. [6] 1 Cor. 1. 24.

find

find me. In ſpeaking to the laſt Clauſe of theſe Words, I ſhall, by his Aſſiſtance,

Firſt, *Conſider what it is to ſeek Chriſt early.*

Secondly, *What peculiar Encouragements there are to ſuch as ſeek him early, that they ſhall find him.*

And cloſe all with ſome *Improvements.*

Firſt, *Conſider what it is to ſeek Chriſt early.*

Seeking the Lord, is ſometimes uſed in Scripture for the particular Duty of Prayer; and at other times for the whole of Religion. In this wideſt Senſe of the Expreſſion it may be underſtood, where it is ſaid, [1] *They ſhall praiſe the Lord, that ſeek him. All the Ends of the World ſhall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the Kindreds of the Nations ſhall worſhip before thee.* And [2] *hearken to me, ye that follow after Righteouſneſs, ye that ſeek the Lord.*

Accordingly, to ſeek Chriſt, as it relates to the *Object* of our ſeeking, or that which we ſeek for, is to ſeek the true Knowledge of him, and a ſaving Intereſt in him. It is to ſeek his Favour and Acceptance, his Guidance and Aſſiſtance, his Righteouſneſs, Grace and Government, his Image and his Glory, his Smiles upon us in this World, and his receiving us at laſt to all the Glory and Bleſſedneſs of the next. It is to ſeek that he may be all that to us, and that

[1] Pſal. 22. 26, 27. [2] Iſai. 51. 1.

we

we may be all that to him, for which he is made known and propos'd in the Goſpel.

And as it relates to the *Acts* of our ſeeking him, it is to attend with diligence upon all the Means of Grace, and inſtituted Ordinances of divine Worſhip; and to be found in the Performance of all religious Dutys to him, and to the Father thro' him, by the gracious Aids and Influences of the Holy Spirit. It is to attend upon them, and perform them, with a ſerious and inquiring temper of Soul, with Faith and Love, with Choice and Delight, with Integrity and Uprightneſs of Heart, with holy Reſolution and Continuance, with an intire Dependance on him, and humble Hope in him for Light and Grace, for Acceptance and Succeſs.

Our Text particularly ſpeaks of ſeeking him *early*, as of great Importance in our ſeeking, if we would find what we ſeek for. And what this *peculiar manner* of ſeeking him is, is the Subject of our preſent Conſideration.

The Word tranſlated *ſeeking him early*, [משחרי] ſignifies alſo *carefully*, *earneſtly*, or *diligently*; becauſe the things that we are moſt ſolicitous about, uſually engage our firſt Inquiries before all others. And thus it is render'd in other Places: [1] *Therefore came I forth to meet thee,* DILIGENTLY *to ſeek thy Face.* And *he that* DILIGENTLY *ſeeketh Good, procureth Favour.* Hence to ſeek Chriſt *early*, may be conſider'd, with reſpect to the *Time of Life*, to the *Day of Grace*,

[1] Prov. 7. 15, *and* 11. 27.

or Opportunitys of ſeeking him, and to *all other things.*

I. It is to ſeek him early, *with reſpect to the time of Life,* or *in the younger part of our Days.* In this Senſe of the Word, it is ſaid, [1] *He that loveth his Son, chaſtneth him betimes*; *i. e.* while he is yet young. So to ſeek Chriſt early is to ſeek him *betimes*, like good *Joſias*, who, [2] *while he was yet young, began to ſeek after the God of* David *his Father*; and like young *Timothy*, who [3] *from a Child had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wiſe to Salvation, through Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Hence ſays the Royal Preacher, [4] *Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them.*

This greateſt and moſt important Concern of all others, is not to be put off to the buſy Time of Life, that is incumber'd with the Cares and Hurrys of this World; nor to old Age, that is infeebled by Decays, and loaded with Infirmitys. Theſe are not fit Seaſons for ſolemn Tranſactions of this kind: the Head, Heart and Hands, fill'd with other things, will find little leiſure for theſe. And languiſhing broken Spirits, oppreſs'd with the Weight of Sickneſs, Pain, and decrepit Age, have enough to do to grapple with their own preſent ſenſible Conflicts, and are too apt to ſink into a Confuſion or In-

[1] Prov. 13. 24. [2] 2 Chron. 34. 2. [3] 2 Tim. 3. 15. [4] Eccleſ. 12. 1.

dolence, that ſhuts out attention to future and inviſible Objects.

It is never too ſoon to ſeek after Chriſt; but quickly, alas! none knows how ſoon, it may be too late. The ſooner it is begun, the better it is for us, and for thoſe we have to do with; the more excellent it is in it ſelf, and the more Pleaſure we ſhall have in after Reflections upon it. None ever repented that they began too ſoon; but many have been aſham'd, and troubled to think that they deferr'd it ſo long.

II. It is to ſeek him early, *with reſpect to the Day of Grace*, or *to our Opportunitys of ſeeking him.* Thus the Word in our Text is uſed to expreſs the earlieſt Opportunitys, or the firſt Occaſions, that ſome particular Circumſtances offer, or call us to, for ſeeking after God. In this Senſe *Bildad* ſaid to *Job*, with regard to the diſtreſſing Providences he was under, which remarkably call'd for his Inquiries after God. [1] *If thou wouldſt ſeek unto God betimes, and make Supplication to the Almighty——tho thy Beginning was ſmall, yet thy latter End ſhould greatly increaſe.* And the ſame Word is uſed of *Iſrael*, in the time of their alarming Diſtreſs, [2] *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him; and they return'd and inquir'd early after God.* And ſays God, [3] *I will go and return to my Place, till they acknowledge their Offence, and ſeek my Face: In their Affliction they will ſeek me early.* q. d. " They " will no longer delay, or put off their ſeeking

[1] Job 8. 5, 7. [2] Pſal. 78. 34. [3] Hoſ. 5. 15.

" me,

" me, as they have done in the Days of their " Security, Eaſe and Fulneſs."

Whenever God calls us by his Word, or by any remarkable Providence to ſeek after Chriſt, we ſhould be early or ſpeedy in attending to thoſe Calls, and ſeeking him according to them. The Language of our Souls ſhould be like *Samuel*'s, ſaying, [1] *Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth. When he ſays, Seek ye my Face; our Hearts ſhould* immediately *ſay unto him,* [2] *Thy Face, Lord, will we ſeek.* And as ſoon as he ſays to any of us, as he did to *Iſrael, Return ye backſliding Children, and I will heal your backſlidings*; we, like them, ſhould be early in ſaying to him, [3] *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is Salvation hoped for from the Hills, and from the multitude of Mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the Salvation of* Iſrael.

Some of you, perhaps, for want of Inclination, or for want of Opportunity, have ſpent the early Parts of your Lives without hearing the Goſpel, or enjoying the Means of Grace. But now the Providence of God hath brought you under the Miniſtry of the Word, and ſent his gracious Calls to you by the Goſpel. This is the Seaſon for you to ſeek early after Chriſt, without letting the Opportunity ſlip. Whatever the number of your Years may be, you ſhou'd now look upon your ſelves concern'd to be ſpeedy in it; now, while the Day of Grace is breaking upon you; now, as ſoon as you hear

[1] 1 Sam. 3. 9. [2] Pſal. 27. 8. [3] Jer. 3. 22, 23.

what a way of Salvation is provided in Chriſt for ſuch as you are; and now, while a Door of Mercy is open before you. [1] *To-day, if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* [2] *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the Day of Salvation.*

Others of you, it may be, are under ſome awakening Providences in concurrence with God's Word, or are caſt under ſome awakening and evangelical Miniſtry, which you never were under before. As ſoon as God begins to ſpeak to you in a remarkable manner by all or either of theſe Means, you ſhou'd begin to ſeek after Chriſt, if you have not yet been help'd to do it; or if you have, you are now call'd to do it yet more and more, without delay, that you may find ſpeedy Relief for your Safety and Comfort in this World, and may obtain eternal Salvation thro' him in the next. Thus *Moſes* is repreſented as pleading with God for *Iſrael*, under a View of his awful Judgments. [3] *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy Servants. O ſatisfy us early with thy Mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our Days.* And we may allude in this Caſe to what God ſays by the Prophet, [4] *All ye Inhabitants of the World, and Dwellers on the Earth, ſee ye, when he lifteth up an Enſign on the Mountains; and when he bloweth a Trumpet, hear ye.*

[1] Heb. 3. 15. [2] 2 Cor. 6. 2. [3] Pſal. 90. 12, 13, 14. [4] Iſai. 18. 3.

Others

Others of you, poſſibly, may have ſome Strivings of God's Spirit with you by means of his Word and Providence, beyond what you have formerly been favour'd with, or for ſome time paſt have felt. If he awakens your ſtupid Conſciences, reproves, checks, and convinces you of the Evil of your Ways, and of your guilty, deprav'd, and dangerous State by Nature: If he leads your Thoughts to Chriſt, and gives you a Senſe of your need of him to ſave you from your Sins, and from the Wrath to come; and works up any Inclinations in your Souls toward him, that you may have Righteouſneſs and Strength in him, and may be enabled to turn to God from all your Iniquitys, thro' him. This is a favourable Opportunity, in which you are called to ſeek him early. This is no time for a delay, leſt the bleſſed Gale ſhou'd paſs away, and never return again. But, as the wiſe Mariner takes the firſt Advantage of the Wind to ſet out for his intended Port; ſo you ſhou'd be as early as poſſible in falling in with, and improving the gracious Influence; and ſet forward under that Advantage to ſeek after Chriſt. Hence ſaid the Church at one time, [1] *Draw me, we will run after thee.* The time of his drawing, is the time for our running; for [2] *no Man can come to Chriſt, except the Father that ſent him, draw him.* And hence *Ephraim* ſaid at another time, [3] *Turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned.* And [4] *I*, ſays *David, will*

[1] Cant. 1. 4. [2] Joh. 6. 44. [3] Jer. 31. 18.
[4] Pſal. 119. 32.

run

run the way of thy Commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my Heart.

Thus the earlieſt Opportunitys, of what ſort ſoever they are, whereby we are call'd to ſeek Chriſt, ſhou'd be made uſe of for that purpoſe, immediately and without delay. And the earlieſt Part of Life, in which we are favour'd with them, is the Seaſon in which we ought to ſeek him.

III. It is to ſeek him early, *with reſpect to all other things*, or *before and above all things elſe.*

This relates to the *Earneſtneſs* and *Fervour* with which he is to be ſought in the younger part of our Days, and in the firſt Opportunitys we have for ſeeking him.

We have already ſeen that the Word here render'd *early*, ſignifys alſo *earneſtly* or *diligently*. And thus it is to be underſtood in the uſe that the Pſalmiſt makes of it with regard to ſeeking the Lord; [1] *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee: my Soul thirſteth for thee; my Fleſh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirſty Land, where no Water is, to ſee thy Power and thy Glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the Sanctuary.* His ſeeking him *early*, evidently reſpects the eager Deſire, and earneſt Concern, Care, and Diligence, with which he ſought him above all things elſe. And it anſwers to other Expreſſions of the ardent Breathings of his Soul this way, as impatient of Denial, whatever elſe he ſhou'd be depriv'd of, particularly where he

[1] Pſal. 63. 1, 2.

ſays,

ſays, [1] *One thing have I deſir'd of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.* And [2] *as the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God: when ſhall I come and appear before God?*

In this Senſe, ſeeking Chriſt early is to *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs.* 'Tis to ſeek him with the whole Heart, and with the greateſt Seriouſneſs of Spirit, like Perſons in good earneſt to find him. 'Tis to ſeek him with the utmoſt intenſeneſs and unitedneſs of all the Powers and Facultys of the Soul; and that before the Heart is fill'd with other things. And among other Seaſons, it is to ſeek him in the *Morning*, or earlieſt Part of the Day, before the Mind is diverted or embaraſs'd by the Pleaſures or Buſineſs of the Day. Thus *David* ſaid, [3] *I intreated thy Favour with my whole Heart.* And *my Voice ſhalt thou hear in the Morning, O Lord; in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee, and will look up.* Let us now proceed to,

Secondly, *Conſider what peculiar Encouragements there are to ſuch as ſeek Chriſt early, that they ſhall find him.*

They that ſeek him earneſtly, before and above all things elſe, in the earlieſt Time of

[1] Pſal. 27. 4. [2] Pſal. 42. 1, 2. [3] Pſal. 119. 58, *and* 5. 3.

Life,

Life, and earlieſt Opportunitys that are afforded them for it, have unqueſtionably all the numerous Encouragements to hope for Succeſs, that the Goſpel ſets before them in common with others, who have not been ſo early in it. They have all the Conſiderations to encourage them, that ariſe from the abſolute Freeneſs, Sovereignty, and plenteous Riches of God's abounding Grace in Chriſt, to all ſorts and degrees of Sinners; from the ſaving Offices of Chriſt; from the Fulneſs of Merit, Righteouſneſs, Compaſſion, Tenderneſs, and Faithfulneſs, that are in him; from his Ability for and Pleaſure in his Work, and in thoſe that are willing to give him the Honour of it, by coming to him that he may magnify his Office toward them. They have all the Encouragements that ariſe from God's delight in Mercy thro' him, and his declared [1] *Pleaſure in them that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his Mercy*; from the multiply'd Declarations and Promiſes of his Grace, from the begun Workings of his Spirit in their Hearts, to incline them to ſeek him; and from the ſacred Regard he hath to his Truth and Faithfulneſs, and to the Honour of his own Name, in ſaving all that come to Chriſt, and to the Father thro' him.

All theſe rich Encouragements, with many others of the like kind, are Yours that ſeek him early. They are yours, as much as, and in ſome reſpects more, than they are the Encouragements of all others, that at any time

[1] Pſal. 47. 11.

what-

whatever are enabled to ſeek him with their whole Hearts. The ſooner you begin to ſeek him, the greater Strength and Weight there is in all theſe Encouragements to you, that you ſhall not miſcarry, or be rejected; and you'll find the fewer Objections to clog them, or to incumber your Faith and Hope in him, according to them.

But beſides all theſe, there are other Encouragements, that you have above all others, and that are *peculiar* to your ſelves, whoſe Hearts are inclin'd betimes to ſeek him. And I ſhall ſuggeſt *three* or *four* of theſe, with an Eye to the bleſſed Spirit to impreſs them upon your Hearts, and effectually to influence you to ſeek him now, in your preſent Youth, and preſent Opportunity, without any farther delay. Therefore,

I. *Early ſeeking him is moſt pleaſing to him.*

I begin with this, becauſe the Verſe which our Text concludes, leads our Thoughts to it. There Chriſt ſays, *I love them that love me, and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.* This Declaration of his *loving them that love him*, may be moſt fitly underſtood of his peculiar Complacency in thoſe that early ſhew their love, by their *early ſeeking him.* Its being mention'd juſt before, and in connection with early ſeeking him, naturally gives this Hint to our Thoughts. And 'tis as if he ſhould ſay, " My " chief Pleaſure and Delight is in thoſe, that are " early in loving and ſeeking me. This moſt of all " takes my Heart, and is acceptable to me. Mine

" Eye is eſpecially upon *them* for good, my ten-
" dereſt Affections are toward *them*, my Com-
" paſſions move me to embrace *them*, who
" while their Hearts are young and tender dili-
" gently ſeek me. I know they can't tell how
" to bear Diſcouragements, and 'twould be
" ready to break their Hearts to meet with ſe-
" vere Repulſes, while their Affections are ten-
" der, and their Judgments are but weak. I
" ſee their mourning Love, their eager and
" their early Deſires toward me; I hear their
" Groanings after me, and find that nothing
" but my ſelf can ſatisfy them. And, ſpeaking
" after the manner of Men, I can't but be well
" affected toward them, and liſten to the ſound-
" ing of my Bowels: I will ſurely have Mercy
" upon them."

Young and early Seekers of Chriſt, are apt to miſconſtrue his Conduct, and to be diſcourag'd if they don't immediately find him. But they may think they hear the compaſſionate Language directed to them, as it was to his People of old, [1] *Is* Ephraim *my dear Son? Is he a pleaſant Child? for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill; therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have Mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord.* And [2] *thus ſaith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place; with him alſo that is of a contrite humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite Ones.*

[1] Jer. 31. 20. [2] Iſai. 57. 15, 16.

For

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the Spirit would fail before me, and the Souls which I have made. Methinks there is ſomething exceeding ſuitable in theſe Tenderneſſes of Expreſſion to the abaſh'd and fluttering Temper of young Minds, when God's Spirit begins to work upon them. And the Account we have of Chriſt's meek and compaſſionate Conduct in *Matt.* xii. 20. may in a double View, with regard to their tender Age and Grace, be apply'd to them. *A bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break, and the ſmoking Flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend forth Judgment unto Victory.* The great Shepherd of the Sheep [1] *gathers the Lambs with his Arm, and carrys them in his Boſom*; as well as *gently leads thoſe that are with young.*

With what Tenderneſs did our bleſſed Lord expreſs his Affection to young ones, when he ſaid, [2] *Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of ſuch is the Kingdom of God!* And how graciouſly did he encourage, accept, and patronize the Childrens *Hoſannas to the Son of* David, ſaying, [3] *Have ye never read, out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe?* And when the *young* [4] Prodigal *came to himſelf,* when he began with Relentings, Grief and Shame, to reflect upon his extravagant Follys, and to think of going to his Father, and imploring his Mercy, with acknowledgments of his own Guilt and Unwor-

[1] Iſai. 40. 11. [2] Mark 10. 14, 16. [3] Matt. 21. 15, 16. [4] Luke 15. 17, 18, 19.

thineſs; with what eager Affection did his Father behold, compaſſionate, encourage and embrace him? [1] *When he was yet a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had Compaſſion, and ran, and fell on his Neck, and kiſs'd him.*

As wiſe and affectionate Parents take extraordinary Pleaſure in the firſt pretty Appearances and Expreſſions of their young Childrens Duty and Love, and take ſpecial Care to encourage them: and as the Owners of a Plantation, are moſt of all delighted with the earlieſt Buddings and firſt Fruits of their young Trees, and are in a particular manner mindful of *them*, and careful to defend and cultivate *them*, that they may thrive and bring forth more Fruit: So Chriſt, ſpeaking after the manner of Men, may be ſaid to be moſt of all pleaſed, when young Minds begin to be well affected toward him, and to breathe out their fervent, tho broken Deſires, after him. He is remarkably mindful of them, and takes ſpecial care to encourage them.

God, ſpeaking of *Iſrael* under the Character of a *Child*, ſays, [2] *Then I loved him, I taught* Ephraim *alſo to go, taking them by their Arms, but they knew not that I heal'd them. I drew them with Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love.* And [3] *Thus ſaith the Lord, I remember thee, the Kindneſs of thy Youth, the Love of thine Eſpouſals,*— Iſrael *was Holineſs unto the Lord, and the Firſt-fruits of his Increaſe: All that devour him ſhall offend; Evil ſhall come upon them, ſaith the Lord.* He ſpeaks of their early Regards to

[1] *Verſ.* 20. [2] Hoſ. 11. 1, 3, 4. [3] Jer. 2. 2, 3.

him,

him, in the Language of Love, as if it were a *Kindneſs* and Favour done to him: He will ſet his Eyes upon them for Good, that give him the Firſt-fruits of their Increaſe, the firſt Products of their young Minds: He will eſpouſe their Cauſe, and reſent the Injurys that others offer them. How much happier is their Caſe than that of the little Children that *mock'd* the Prophet *Eliſha*, and thereby threw Contempt on him whoſe Prophet he was, [1] *ſaying to him, Go up, thou Bald-head, go up, thou Bald-head?* And what was the Effect of this profane irreligious Taunt? *He turn'd back, and look'd upon them, and,* doubtleſs under immediate Suggeſtion from the jealous ſin-avenging God, *he curſed them in the Name of the Lord: and there came forth two She-bears out of the Wood, and tore Forty and two Children of them.*

What a kind Notice did God take of good *Joſiah*, who, while he was yet young, began to ſeek after the God of *David* his Father? [2] *Becauſe thy Heart was tender, and thou haſt humbled thy ſelf before the Lord, when thou heardſt what I ſpake againſt this Place, and againſt the Inhabitants thereof,——I alſo have heard thee, ſaith the Lord. Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy Fathers, and thou ſhalt be gather'd into thy Grave in Peace, and thine Eyes ſhall not ſee all the Evil which I will bring upon this Place.* He will never forget the Kindneſſes of his Peoples Youth; and he would have themſelves to be mindful of 'em all their

[1] 2 Kings 2. 23, 24. [2] 2 Kings 22. 19, 20.

Days,

Days, ſaying, [1] *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my Youth?*

The ſooner you begin in earneſt to ſeek after the Lord, and to give up your ſelves to him, the better Sacrifice is thereby preſented; the Strength and Vigour of your Days, the beſt of your Time and Capacitys are therein devoted to his Fear. The leſs Satan will have of your Service, and the more Chriſt will have of it; the leſs Diſhonour, and the more Honour will be brought to him; the fewer Offences will be committed againſt him, and the more Fruits of Righteouſneſs will be brought forth to him. And this can't but be very peculiarly pleaſing and acceptable in his Sight, who *loves Righteouſneſs and hates Iniquity*; and will not deſpiſe the Work of his own Hands. Hence,

II. *'Tis the ordinary Courſe of divine Grace to be found of early Seekers.*

Obſervation and Experience may ſatisfy us, that 'tis exceeding rare for any to mind Religion in earneſt, or to be ſavingly turn'd to God in Chriſt in old Age, who have ſat under the Goſpel, and gone careleſly on in Impenitence and Unbelief all their Lives long before. Some few Inſtances there may be indeed of ſuch, that ſovereign Grace may keep up Evidences to the World of its Glory. But alas! they are very few, here and there one out of great Multitudes. But Inſtances of this ſort bear no proportion to

[1] Jer. 3. 4.

thoſe

thoſe that ſeek and find Chriſt in their early Days.

It is likewiſe eaſy to obſerve, that, generally ſpeaking, Sinners that are brought under the Means of Grace, or under ſome new, cloſe, and ſearching Miniſtrations, that they never enjoy'd before; if they have not an early Effect upon their Hearts, in ſome few Years at moſt after the Providence of God has favour'd them with thoſe Means, they never ſavingly profit by them at all. The chief Operations of God's Grace upon their Souls in converting Work, is uſually in the early Days of thoſe new Opportunitys, or ſoon after they enjoy'd 'em.

I appeal, for the Confirmation of all this, to your own Obſervation, in the Inſtances you are acquainted with. I appeal to the Experiences of ſome among your ſelves. And I appeal to the Scripture-Account of the great Succeſs of the Goſpel, when it *ran and was glorified*, and *great numbers believ'd and turn'd to the Lord:* It was ſoon after the Goſpel came to be publiſh'd among a People, that had not heard it before.

All the Churches mention'd in the New Teſtament were chiefly made up of ſuch early Converts. And when the Apoſtles went to any Places or People, that at the firſt hearing of the Goſpel univerſally harden'd themſelves againſt it, they look'd upon it as a black Omen, and as a ſtrong Indication, that God's Elect did not lie among them, that the Goſpel would not be receiv'd, and that it would be in vain to continue the Miniſtrations of it there.

Thus

Thus the Apoſtle *Paul* took the Indication at *Antioch*, and acted according to it, when the *Jews* deſpiſed, and reſolutely ſet themſelves againſt the firſt Publications of the Goſpel there. [1] *Then* Paul *and* Barnabas *waxed bold and ſaid, It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you: But, ſeeing you put it from you, and judge your ſelves unworthy of everlaſting Life, lo, we turn to the* Gentiles. *And when the* Gentiles *heard this they were glad, and glorify'd the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal Life believ'd.* And when he was at *Rome*, he ſaid to thoſe *Jews*, that rejected the Goſpel he brought among them, [2] *expounding and teſtifying the Kingdom of God, and perſuading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the Law of* Moſes, *and out of the Prophets, from Morning till Evening, Well ſpake the Holy Ghoſt by* Eſaias *the Prophet, unto our Fathers, ſaying, Go unto this People and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand; and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive. For the Heart of this People is waxed groſs, and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes have they cloſed; leſt they ſhou'd ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the Salvation of God is ſent unto the* Gentiles, *and that they will hear it.* Accordingly, Chriſt himſelf, on a particular Occaſion of this ſort, gave an expreſs Order to the Apoſtle, [3] *ſaying to him, Make haſte,*

[1] Acts 13. 46, 48. [2] *Chap.* 28. 23—28. [3] *Chap.* 22. 18.

haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem, *for they will not receive thy Teſtimony concerning me.* And at another time, [1] *He ſpake to* Paul *in the Night by a Viſion, Be not afraid, but ſpeak, and hold not thy Peace: For I am with thee, and no Man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee; for I have much People in this City.*

So that, where he hath a ſpecial Deſign of Grace upon any Souls, the uſual Way and Courſe of that Grace is to begin with them betimes, either in the early Days of their Lives, if they have been brought up under the Goſpel, or in the early Seaſon of their Opportunitys of hearing it, or of coming under ſome new, clear, and impreſſive Miniſtrations of it. Fact therefore ſhews, that early ſeeking him is moſt remarkably the finding Time; and that thoſe who neglect that time, rarely, if ever, ſeek him afterwards at all, ſo as to find him. It may therefore be ſaid to you, with ſome peculiarity and emphaſis, that are yet young; and to you, that have but lately come under the Means of Grace, or under ſome new, clearer, and more lively Miniſtrations of the Goſpel, than you have been under before, if there are any ſuch among you, [2] *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the Wicked forſake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Hence,

[1] Acts 18. 9, 10. [2] Iſai. 55. 6, 7.

III. *Early Seekers have fewer Obſtructions to their ſeeking and finding Chriſt, than others have.*

The earlier you ſeek him, the fewer Provocations there are in you to grieve the Holy Spirit in his Strivings with you; the leſs Danger there is, leſt God in his righteous Judgment ſhould give you up to the Vanity of your own Minds, and to the Folly, Hardneſs, and Madneſs of your own corrupt Hearts, or ſhou'd reject your earneſt Applications to Chriſt, and to his Grace in him at laſt for Mercy; the leſs ſtupid and harden'd you will ordinarily be in your Iniquitys; the leſs unyielding to the Impreſſions of his Grace; the leſs confirm'd in the Habits of Sin; the leſs ſubjected to the over-bearing Dominion of it; and the leſs liable to the Temptations of Satan, and to the Intanglements, Snares, Cares, and Troubles of this evil World. And the longer you put off this ſolemn and important Work, the more all the oppoſite Obſtructions will grow upon you; and the greater Difficulty you will find in being reclaim'd, and brought off from your wonted and eſtabliſh'd Courſe in Sin. Hence is that alarming Expoſtulation by the Prophet, [1] *Can the* Ethiopian *change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye alſo do Good, that are accuſtom'd to do Evil.*

It may be ſaid of ſuch in this Caſe, as was ſaid of *Ephraim*; [2] *Strangers have devour'd his Strength, and he knoweth it not: Yea, gray Hairs*

[1] Jer. 13. 23. [2] Hoſ. 7. 9.

are

are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. The melancholy Symptoms of approaching Deſtruction are upon them, as gray Hairs upon the Head are manifeſt Tokens that a Man is not far from the Grave; and yet they are ſo ſtupid and ſecure in Sin, that they take no notice of it, and are not concern'd in earneſt for Deliverance from it. And if, while any of you in your younger Days neglect ſeeking Chriſt, Death ſhou'd cut you off, as it doth many in their Youth, that will put an early and eternal Bar upon you: you are loſt, irretrievably loſt for ever. But,

IV. *There are ſome peculiar Promiſes to early Seekers, over and above all thoſe that are made to others with them.*

You have (as was obſerv'd before in general) full as much or more Encouragement than others, from the Promiſes that are made in an indefinite manner, without reſtraint to any Ages or Circumſtances of Life, ſuch as theſe that follow. [1] *Bleſſed is the Man that heareth me, watching daily at my Gates, waiting at the Poſts of my Doors. For whoſo findeth me, findeth Life, and ſhall obtain Favour of the Lord.* [2] *They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their Strength; they ſhall mount up with Wings as Eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint.* [3] *And ye ſhall ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for*

[1] Prov. 8. 34, 35. [2] Iſai. 40. 31. [3] Jer. 29. 13.

me with all your Heart. [1] *Then ſhall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.* And our bleſſed Lord has added many other encouraging Promiſes in the New Teſtament, ſuch as, [2] *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be fill'd. Ask, and it ſhall be given you: Seek, and ye ſhall find: Knock, and it ſhall be open'd to you. Come unto me all ye that labour aud are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in Heart: and ye ſhall find reſt to your Souls.* [3] *All that the Father giveth me ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out. And if any Man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath ſaid, out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water. But this ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive.*

Theſe, with many other precious Promiſes of a like Nature, ſome of which have been mention'd before; theſe, I ſay, are doubtleſs, to ſpeak the leaſt, as great Encouragements to you that are young, to ſeek the Lord, as they can be to others of more advanc'd Years.

But beſides theſe, there are *peculiar* Promiſes to you, in which you are particularly named, and which others have no ſhare in, or not ſo good and evident a ſhare as you. Such a Promiſe is that gracious and peremp-

[1] Hoſ. 6. 3. [2] Matt. 5. 6, *and* 7. 7, *and* 11. 28, 29.
[3] John 6. 37, *and* 7. 37, 38, 39.

tory

tory one in our Text, *Thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.* What can be a more poſitive and aſſuring Promiſe to you; and what can be a greater Encouragement to your early ſeeking him than this? And as other Promiſes in the following Verſes ſtand in connection with this, they may be fairly look'd upon, as intended in a ſpecial manner for you. There Chriſt adds, for the farther Encouragement of theſe early Seekers, that They ſhall find him, and that he is worth their finding. [1] *Riches and Honour are with me, yea, durable Riches and Righteouſneſs. My Fruit is better than Gold, yea than fine Gold; and my Revenue than choice Silver. I lead in the Way of Righteouſneſs, in the midſt of the Paths of Judgment; that I may cauſe thoſe that love me to inherit Subſtance; and I will fill their Treaſures.*

There are likewiſe ſeveral other Promiſes in this Book, that ſeem to have a moſt direct View to young People, under the Figure of *Solomon*'s Son, particularly in the ſecond Chapter, where he ſays, [2] *My Son,----if thou crieſt after Knowledge, and lifteſt up thy Voice for Underſtanding: If thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hid Treaſures: Then ſhalt thou underſtand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.* And this he mentions as an effectual guard againſt the irregular Paſſions and Inclinations of young

[1] Prov. 8. 18---21. [2] Prov. 2. 1, 3, 4, 5.

Men,

Men, and againſt their being drawn aſide and enſnared by Women of infamous Characters, [1] *who forſake the Guide of their Youth, and forget the Covenant of their God.*

The Children of believing Parents have peculiar Promiſes to encourage their Faith and Hope in their earlieſt ſeeking after Chriſt, that they may lay hold on God's Covenant in him. He hath ſaid to *Abraham*, and to every one, [2] *that walks in the Steps of the Faith of our Father* Abraham, [3] *I will eſtabliſh my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations, for an everlaſting Covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.* [4] *And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayſt live.* And again, [5] *I will pour Water upon him that is thirſty, and Floods upon the dry Ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thine Offſpring.----One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's; and another ſhall call himſelf by the Name of* Jacob; *and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſurname himſelf by the Name of* Iſrael.

The young Offſpring of God's Servants may plead theſe Promiſes with peculiar Advantage; they may hereby be excited to ſeek with Hope, and may be aſſur'd, that, if they

[1] Prov. 2. 17. [2] Rom. 4. 12. [3] Gen. 17. 7.
[4] Deut. 30. 6. [5] Iſai. 44. 3, 5.

are

are help'd to avouch the Lord God of their Parents for their God, he will without fail be found of them.

He hath ſaid for the Relief of *Fatherleſs Children* under their Oppreſſions, [1] *If they cry at all unto me, I will hear their Cry.* And our dear Lord hath diſtinguiſh'd early Seekers of him with a Promiſe, ſaying, [2] *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs; and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you:* That is, the Kingdom of God, and all other neceſſary Things. And the exceeding delightful Promiſes you have toward the Cloſe of *Pſal.* xcii, are moſt properly to be underſtood as relating to Perſons that come in to the Lord in their younger Days. For they are Promiſes to the Righteous, of continuing their begun Grace and Fruitfulneſs, till they arrive at *old Age*, which ſuppoſes them not to be advanced to that Age when they firſt became Righteous. For it is there ſaid, [3] *The Righteous ſhall flouriſh like the Palm-Tree: he ſhall grow like a Cedar in* Lebanon. *Thoſe that be planted in the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God. They ſhall ſtill bring forth Fruit in old Age, they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing; to ſhew that the Lord is upright.*

But on the other hand, Threatnings inſtead of Promiſes belong to thoſe, that in their younger Days account God's Work a Burden, that caſt off his Covenant, and chooſe to

[1] Exod. 22, 23. [2] Matt. 6. 33. [3] Pſal. 92. 12—15.

be

be the Servants of Sin rather than the Servants of Chriſt; or that intend to put him off with the decrepit Services of old Age, when they can no longer taſte the Pleaſures, or purſue the Buſineſs of this Life; when their Strength is waſted, and their Spirits are enfeebled by Sickneſs and Infirmitys; when their Lives are good for nothing, and juſt ready to expire. Such Sinners may think they hear God's Rebuke to them, in the Language of his Expoſtulations by the Prophet. [1] *Ye ſaid, behold, what a Wearineſs is it, and ye have ſnuff'd at it, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the Lame, and the Sick; thus ye brought an Offering: Should I accept this of your Hands, ſaith the Lord. But curſed be the Deceiver, which hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and ſacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.*

Suppoſe in the very laſt Decline, and finiſhing Period of a Life ſpent in Rebellions, you were to [2] *offer* your Service *to your Governor, would he be pleaſed with you, or accept your Perſons?* would he not rather diſdain your Mockerys, and reject you with Indignation? How much more muſt the great God think himſelf affronted, and reſent the Affront? Where has he ever promiſed that he would accept of ſuch a ridiculous Offering? and what can you expect but a Curſe at his Hands? O how have early Seekers the Advantage of ſuch! all the Promiſes ſtand in favour to them; and a Bleſſing

[1] Mal. 1. 13, 14. [2] *Verſ.* 8.

inſtead

inſtead of a Curſe is every where pronounced upon them.

Object. But poſſibly ſome of you may object, that God has ſaid of ſome, that [1] *they ſhall ſeek him early, but ſhall not find him.*

Anſw. To this I anſwer, That the ſeeking him early there ſpoken of, don't mean early, with reſpect to the Time of Life, or Day of Grace; but early, with reſpect to the Time of their *Deſtruction coming upon them* (mention'd in the foregoing verſe) for their wilful Neglects and continued Abuſes of God's gracious Calls to them. When his Vengeance begins to be finally executed upon them, and they begin to feel themſelves ſinking under the Load of his dreadful and righteous Wrath; then, immediately upon this, *early*, or ſoon after this, they in all their Agonys will ſeek him, [2] *ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us.* But alas! the Day of Grace will then be over. *The Door will then be ſhut; and Chriſt will ſay unto them, I know you not whence you are.* Then that early will be too late to find him. The God whom they all along rejected before, will reject them then. And this you may plainly ſee to be the Meaning of the Paſſage, from whence this Objection is taken, if you read it together with what goes before and after it, which ſtands thus. [3] *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched*

[1] Prov. 1. 28. [2] Luke 13. 25. [3] Prov. 1. 24—31.

out my Hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my Counſel, and would none of my Reproof: I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as Deſolation, and your Deſtruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Diſtreſs and Anguiſh cometh upon you. Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but ſhall not find me: For that they hated Knowledge, and did not chooſe the Fear of the Lord. They would none of my Counſel: They deſpiſed all my Reproof. Therefore ſhall they eat of the Fruit of their own Way, and be fill'd with their own Devices. A few Reflections, for the Improvement of all this, ſhall cloſe the whole Diſcourſe.

APPLICATION.

I. Let ſuch young People take Conviction of their Sin and Folly, who early ſeek thoſe things that hinder their early ſeeking Chriſt.

This is the way of too many; inſtead of early ſeeking Chriſt, they ſeek ſuch things as keep them off, and turn them aſide from ſeeking Him. This is the guilty and dangerous Caſe of thoſe of you that early ſeek irreligious and inſnaring, looſe and vain Companions, that have no Fear of God before their Eyes, that make a Jeſt of Religion, and make a Mock of Sin. This is the Caſe of thoſe of you, that early ſeek publick Houſes to drink the Cup of the Drunkard, to tipple with them, [1] *that are*

[1] Iſa. 5. 11, 22.

mighty

mighty to drink Wine, and follow ſtrong Drink, till it inflame them; and that early ſeek to waſte your Time, Reputation, Money and Conſciences, to contract bad Habits, to abuſe your ſelves, and ruin your own Souls for ever. And this is the Caſe of thoſe of you, that early ſeek your Pleaſures and Diverſions, Games, Sports and Jollity; that early ſeek ſome or all of theſe, under the Notion or Pretence of innocent Paſtimes, till you run into all irregular Practices, and are put upon Shifts and Falſhoods, Tricking and Deceits, to cover your Wickedneſs, or to hide your ſelves from Reproof and Shame, and to cheat your own Conſciences and Friends.

Theſe extinguiſh all ſerious Thoughts about Chriſt and Religion, about the eternal World, and your own immortal Souls. Theſe have been the utter Ruin of many a ſober promiſing Youth: And I may appeal to thoſe of you, if there are any ſuch here preſent, who have ever had any ſerious Thoughtfulneſs about Chriſt and your own Souls, and have afterwards taken theſe Courſes, whether the more you have ſought ſuch Company, Pleaſures, and Diverſions, you have not ſought Chriſt leſs, till, it may be, former Convictions have been ſtifled, and you have gone on more ſecurely in the Ways of Sin, and in Neglects of your own Salvation, than in Times paſt you dared to do. O dreadful Event! Have a Care: If this is any of your Caſe, you are in the high Road to eternal De-

ſtruction. And if God don't mercifully awaken you, and turn you from it now, while you are Young, you are in the greateſt Danger of being harden'd in it, and of periſhing with a Vengeance.

II. Let young Ones go home, and pray over the Encouragements they have heard to thoſe that ſeek Chriſt early, till they find them effectual, by his Grace, to engage them in ſeeking him early, and without delay.

Go, and tell him that thou art come by his Aſſiſtance to make him thy early Choice, and to make a full and free Surrender of thy ſelf to him. Plead the Encouragements he hath given to early Seekers; and beg of him to enable thee to plead them in Faith. Tell him thou haſt heard, that ſuch are moſt pleaſing to him, and that he uſes to be found of them. Plead any Promiſes, that ſuit thy Caſe, and eſpecially thoſe that are made to early Seekers. And under a Senſe of all thy Guilt, Vileneſs and Unworthineſs, as a Child of Wrath by Nature, and a Child of Diſobedience by Practice, throw thy ſelf at his feet for Mercy, begging of him to have Compaſſion upon thee, to pardon thy Sins, and to make an effectual Change upon thy Heart now, while it is young and tender, and before thou art encompaſs'd with thoſe Intanglements, that may hereafter hinder thy ſeeking, and finding him. Give him no Reſt, but follow him Time after Time, as a periſhing Creature, with earneſt Entreatys and Prayers,

ers, for Mercy, and with a humble Dependance on his gracious Promiſes, till thou findeſt him to thy own Salvation.

III. Let thoſe of you, that have been help'd to ſeek him early, ſtill go on to ſeek him in all his Ways.

[1] *Then ſhalt thou know the Lord, if thou followeſt on to know him.* If thy Heart is open'd to receive him, as he is freely offer'd to thee in the Goſpel, thou haſt found him; he is thine. And when thou haſt good Hope thro' Grace, that thou haſt begun to find him, take his Yoke ſtill farther upon thee, and give up thy ſelf to him in a Church-ſtate, according to his Appointment and Command. Be *early* in this way of ſeeking him, that thou may'ſt have thy Intereſt in him ſtill farther confirm'd to thee, and his Bonds ſtill farther faſten'd upon thee at his Table; that all may be ratify'd and ſeal'd up to thy Conſcience there; and that thou may'ſt come under his moſt peculiar Preſence and Bleſſing, and under the moſt ſolemn Engagements to be the Lord's.

Many young Perſons, whoſe Hearts have been brought over to Chriſt in their early Days, have ſlipt the Time of their firſt Love, without joining to any Church of Chriſt, and have found it much harder Work afterwards, than it wou'd have been before; and, it may be, have gone on to a ſinful Neglect of the important Duty all their Lives long. They ſuffer

[1] Hoſ. 6. 3.

great

great Loſs and Trouble in their own Souls thereby; are expoſed to greater Temptations, Darkneſs, Wounds, and Dangers; and remain much more unſettled, unfruitful, and uncomfortable in themſelves, and leſs honourable in their Profeſſion of Chriſt, and in the avow'd Teſtimony they ought to bear to his glorious Name, than they otherwiſe might have been. And ſometimes weak, tho true Believers, have found their Reflections upon a continued Neglect of this Duty, have turn'd with a Sting upon their Conſciences, and a Cloud upon their Hopes, when they came to dye.

If therefore there are any among you, who have been inclin'd and enabled by divine Grace to ſeek early after Chriſt, and yet have not thorowly given up your ſelves to him in his Way, that you [1] *may walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs.* Remember, the Promiſe is that [2] *thoſe that be planted in the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God: They ſhall ſtill bring forth Fruit in old Age: They ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.* And God's *Uprightneſs* is engaged to fulfil his Promiſes to them, that in this way are upright with him. But,

IV. Let not older Sinners think themſelves excluded from all Hope.

Tho in your early Days you have neglected ſeeking after Chriſt, and therefore have

[1] Luke 1. 6. [2] Pſal. 92. 12—15.

leſs

leſs Encouragement to your Hopes of finding him now, than younger Sinners have: Yet don't caſt off all hope of Succeſs in ſeeking him, tho at the eleventh Hour. Sovereign Grace may ſtill reach even you. And if God now gives you a Heart to repent of your former Folly and Wickedneſs, and under deep Humblings of Soul before him for it, to ſeek Chriſt earneſtly by Faith now, the Door of Hope is not yet utterly ſhut againſt you. For it is ſaid, without Exception of Ages, concerning *all that come to him,* [1] *he will in no wiſe caſt them out.* And *whoſoever believes in him ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.* If now at length thou findeſt thy Heart to be thorowly engaged to Chriſt, the Wonders of his rich and ſovereign Grace have reached thee, and none of thy former Iniquitys or Neglects ſhall be mention'd to thee. This will ſhew that 'tis not yet too late even for thee; and nothing but this can take off the threatning Symptoms, that are found upon thee.

To conclude therefore, whatever your Age or Condition is, you may think you this Day hear Chriſt ſaying to you, [2] *Behold, I ſtand at the Door, and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.*

[1] Joh. 6. 37. and 3. 16. [2] Rev. 3. 20.

FINIS.

BOOKS ſold by John Clark *and* Richard Hett, *and* John Oſwald.

I. JEſus Chriſt God-Man; or, the Conſtitution of Chriſt's Perſon, with the Evidence and Importance of the Doctrine of his true and proper Godhead. Conſider'd in ſeveral plain and practical Sermons, on *Rom.* ix. 5.

II. The Holy Spirit a divine Perſon; or the Doctrine of his Godhead repreſented, as Evident and Important, in ſeveral Practical Sermons, on 1 *Cor.* 12. 11.

III. The ſtanding Uſe of the Scripture to all the Purpoſes of a divine Revelation. And more particularly, to Patience, Comfort, and Hope: With the Method, Wiſdom, and Advantage of underſtanding it, and giving it due Entertainment. In ſeveral Sermons, on *Rom.* xv. 4. and *Col.* iii. 16.

IV. A Religious Education recommended. In a Sermon preach'd at *Pinners-Hall* in *Broadſtreet*, *March* 13, 1727-8. To the Society that ſupports the Charity-School in *Horſely-Down*, *Southwark*. To which is added, An Account of the Charity-School.

V. Youth's Obſtructions in their Way to Chriſt and Eternal Life: Conſider'd in a Sermon preach'd at *Little St. Hellen*'s, *May* the Firſt, 1728.

VI. Youth reminded of a Judgment to come. In a Sermon preach'd at *Petty-France*, *December* 25, 1728. Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of many that heard it.

All Six by the Reverend Mr. John Guiſe.